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Former France rebuilt

World's largest passenger ship to sail June 1 as the Norway

By Carol Oppenheim

NEW YORK — The luxury liner France, purchased by Norwegian Caribbean Lines last year and rechristened the Norway, will be returned to sea June 1 as a cruise ship plying between Miami and St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands.

The seven day, round-trip cruises, departing each Sunday from Miami, also will stop at the Bahamian out-land Little San Salvador. Prices for the summer season range from \$630 to \$1,415 a person, based on double occupancy per cabin.

Once the last of the graceful and opulent trans-Atlantic liners, the France — launched in 1962 and, at 1,035 feet, one of the longest ships in service — was retired by the French Line six years ago when the rising cost of fuel oil made her too expensive to operate.

A floating legend of pride and art, the France's first class section offered incomparable service and haute cuisine often proclaimed as the best French food in

the world. Between meals, the diversions included bowling alleys, squash courts, a rifle range, golf, and medicinal baths. The kennel runs were equipped with imitation hydrants for American dogs and imitation milestones for French canines.

Norwegian Caribbean bought the liner for \$18 million and is spending another \$65 million to redecorate and refurbish the ship, turning it into what the cruise line calls "a combination hotel and self-contained floating resort city."

THE NORWAY WILL offer only one-class service but passengers will have their choice between standard tourist cabins and luxury staterooms, as well as a limited number of "penthouses" with private patios.

Naval architect Tage Wendborg has added what he describes as an aircraft carrier deck to provide for a third swimming pool, an outdoor restaurant seating 600, and new sunning areas. The interior design is being created by Angelo Donghia and is based on separate salmon and

turquoise color schemes that also will serve as color codes to move passengers on, off, and around the ship.

It will have 65,000 square feet of open deck space — more than any other cruise ship in the world.

The cabins will feature a TV set connected to the ship's closed-circuit system. A fully-equipped gym is provided, as well as an outdoor racquetball court and a sauna.

There will be 14 bars manned by a staff of 80.

The Norway will have space for 2,400 passengers, 400 more than the France. The crew will total about 800.

Much of the ship has been gutted except for the Chambord, the first class restaurant, and the library. The Norway will have a disco with a glass dance floor, plus light shows, casino gambling, several nightclubs featuring Las Vegas type reviews, and a theater. The promenade is being transformed into two streets of boutiques, cafes, and even a soda fountain.

The fare will include three meals a day, plus a midnight buffet. The cuisine will be international with heavy emphasis on Scandinavian and Norwegian dishes.

KNUT KLOSTER, owner of Norwegian Caribbean, said the Norway "will provide an exciting new concept in cruising . . . and make cruising available to middle America at reasonable prices all year around."

The line currently has four other cruise ships operating in the Caribbean. Its market analysts say the cruise market is expected to increase 20 per cent a year through the 1980s.

The Norway now is docked at Bremerhaven, West Germany. When the renovations are finished, the ship is expected to depart May 5 for Oslo and Southampton before making a trans-Atlantic trip to New York City. For one week only, May 18 to 24, the liner will offer a six-day, round-trip cruise from New York to Bermuda.



The rebuilt liner Norway, the world's largest passenger ship, will sail on weekly cruises out of Miami to the Caribbean. A \$65 million construction program has transformed the old liner France into the Norway.

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